

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-04

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /005 R

66601

DRAFTED BY: NEA/INS:RDLORTON:MMK

APPROVED BY: NEA/INS:DKUX

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R 261852Z AUG 74

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

INFO RUMJHT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 4058

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

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FOLLOWING REPEAT NEW DELHI 11244 ACTION SECSTATE INFO DACCA,
ISLAMABAD, LONDON, MOSCOW, KABUL, BOMBAY, CALCUTTA, MADRAS,
AUGUST 24TH:

QUOTE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE NEW DELHI 11244

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, IN, PK, AF

SUBJECT: MIXED OUTLOOK FOR INDO-PAK RELATIONS

REF: ISLAMABAD -8127

SUMMARY: INDIA AND PAKISTAN HAVE AGREED TO REDUCE THE
PROPAGANDA WAR, AND THE TWO SIDES WILL MEET TO DISCUSS
TRAVEL AND COMMUNICATIONS IN ISLAMABAD SEPT 12. INDIA,
HOWEVER, IS STILL CONCERNED ABOUT PAK-AFGHAN RELATIONS AND
HAS UPPED ITS LEVEL OF SUPPORT FOR AFGHANISTAN. INDIA
HASN'T DECIDED HOW TO DEAL WITH THE PAKISTANI PROPOSAL FOR
A SOUTH ASIA NUCLEAR FREE ZONE, WHICH SOME OFFICIALS STRONGLY
SUSPECT IS PRIMARILY AN ANTI-INDIAN MANEUVER. SO FAR THE GOI
HAS REACTED CAUTIOUSLY IN PUBLIC. END SUMMARY.

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1. THE NEXT ROUND OF TALKS: FOREIGN MINISTER SWARAN SINGH

CONFIRMED IN PARLIAMENT AUGUST 23 THAT THE NEXT ROUND OF INDIA-PAKISTAN TALKS WOULD TAKE PLACE IN ISLAMABAD SEPTEMBER 12 AND WOULD COVER TRAVEL AND COMMUNICATIONS. THEY WILL BE AT THE "OFFICIAL" (AS OPPOSED TO THE "POLITICAL") LEVEL, AND THE RUMOR IS THAT FOREIGN SECRETARY KEWAL SINGH WILL HEAD THE INDIAN DELEGATION. ASHOK CHIB, HEAD OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY'S PAKISTAN DIVISION, TOLD US AUGUST 23 THAT THE COMPOSITION HAD NOT YET BEEN DECIDED, ALTHOUGH HE ADMITTED THAT HE WOULD PROBABLY BE A MEMBER. INDIA CLEARLY HOPES THAT THE TALKS WILL LEAD TO OTHERS ON FURTHER NORMALIZATION. IT PUTS CIVIL AVIATION LINKS AND OVERFLIGHTS AS THE NEXT PRIORITY AND HOPES THAT THESE CAN BE ISOLATED FROM OR AT LEAST HANDLED IN NEGOTIATIONS PARALLEL TO THOSE ON CLAIMS ARISING FROM THE INDIAN 1971 BAN ON OVERFLIGHTS. AT THE SAME TIME, INDIA DOESN'T WANT THE TALKS TO GET ONTO NON-TECHNICAL SUBJECTS RIGHT AWAY. IT DOESN'T WANT TO DISCUSS FORMALLY THE INDIAN NUCLEAR EXPLOSION WHICH IT MAINTAINS SHOULD NOT AFFECT NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS BETWEEN INDIA AND PAKISTAN. ALSO, THE FOREIGN MINISTER DENIED IN PARLIAMENT AUGUST 23 THAT INDIA WOULD RAISE WITH PAKISTAN THE PUSHTUNISTAN ISSUE.

2. PROPAGANDA: ALTHOUGH INDIA HASN'T ADMITTED AS MUCH PUBLICLY, IT CLEARLY DRAGGED ITS HEELS ON THE SEPTEMBER 12 TALKS WHILE IT WAITED FOR PAKISTAN TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THE PROPAGANDA WAR. IT ARGUED THAT PAKISTANI ALLEGATIONS CREATED A POOR ATMOSPHERE FOR NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS. AZIZ AHMED SAID IN HIS AUGUST 10 LETTER OFFERING TO RESUME TALKS THAT HE HAD ORDERED PAKISTANI MEDIA TO ADHERE TO THE PROVISIONS OF THE SIMLA AGREEMENT CALLING FOR AN END TO HOSTILE PROPAGANDA. THERE HAVE BEEN FURTHER EXCHANGES. SWARAN SINGH AUGUST 23 SPOKE OF A JOINT EFFORT TO STOP THE RECRIMINATIONS AND ASHOK CHIB SAID ANOTHER LETTER ON THIS SUBJECT FROM FOREIGN SECRETARY AGHA SHAH HAD BEEN RECEIVED A FEW DAYS EARLIER. CHIB SAID THAT PAKISTANI ANTI-INDIAN PROPAGANDA HAD DECLINED IN RECENT DAYS, EXCEPT ON THE SUBJECT OF KASHMIR.

3. INDIAN VIEW OF PAK-AFGHAN RELATIONS -- WHILE ADMITTING PAKISTANI RHETORIC AGAINST AFGHANISTAN MAY HAVE COOLED IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE LAST FEW DAYS, INDIAN OFFICIALS AT THE MEA JOINT SECRETARY LEVEL STILL WORRY ABOUT THE PAK-AFGHAN EQUATION. THEY DECLINE TO SPECULATE ABOUT WHAT INDIA WOULD DO SPECIFICALLY IF HOSTILITIES BROKE OUT, SAYING "WE WOULD HAVE TO DECIDE ON THE BASIS OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES AT THE TIME." THEY ADD THAT INDIA WOULD "VIEW WITH GREAT CONCERN" ANY PAKISTANI MILITARY "ADVENTURE" AGAINST AFGHANISTAN. THEY ALSO SAY THAT PAKISTAN CANNOT EXPECT TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS WITH INDIA WHILE

AT THE SAME TIME ATTACKING AFGHANISTAN MILITARILY. THEY DENY ANY RECENT AFGHAN PROVOCATION OF PAKISTAN, SUCH AS INCREASED SUPPORT FOR THE TRIBES.

COMMENT: WE SUSPECT THAT THE RENEWED PROSPECT FOR INDIA-PAKISTAN NORMALIZATION WILL INCREASE INDIAN INTEREST IN URGING RESTRAINT ON AFGHANISTAN.

4. SOUTH ASIA NUCLEAR FREE ZONE: ACCORDING TO MEA OFFICIALS, THE GOI STILL DOESN'T HAVE A POSITION ON THE PAKISTANI PROPOSAL FOR A SOUTH ASIA NUCLEAR FREE ZONE AND MAY ONLY DEVELOP ONE JUST IN TIME FOR SWARAN SINGH TO INCLUDE IT IN HIS ADDRESS TO THE UNGA. THE FOREIGN MINISTER, THEREFORE, DODGED QUESTIONS ON THE PROPOSAL IN PARLIAMENT AUGUST 23. HE SAID THAT A DECISION ON A NUCLEAR FREE ZONE "CERTAINLY CANNOT BAR THE USE OF NUCLEAR ENERGY FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSES" -- AN OBVIOUS REFERENCE TO PNES. IT WOULD BE "PREMATURE" FOR INDIA TO REACT OFFICIALLY TO THE PAKISTANI PROPOSAL WITHOUT AN OFFICIAL TEXT, ACCORDING TO HIM. HE DISAGREED, HOWEVER, THAT SUBMISSION OF THE PROPOSAL TO THE UN WAS AGAINST THE SIMLA AGREEMENT. "WE SHOULD NOT GIVE THE IMPRESSION THAT WE ARE SHYING AWAY FROM EVEN CONSIDERING THE ISSUE," HE ADDED.

5. PRIVATELY, HOWEVER, INDIAN OFFICIALS (E.G. CHIB) ARE MORE NEGATIVE ABOUT THE IDEA. THEY NOTE THAT THE PAKISTANI INTENT IS TO PRECLUDE PNES. THEY SUGGEST THAT INDIA MAY ARGUE THAT IT CANNOT AGREE UNLESS CHINA IS INCLUDED. A WELL INFORMED COLUMNIST WRITING IN THE TIMES OF INDIA AUGUST 24 ADDS THAT THE AREA SHOULD BE EXPANDED TO INCLUDE THE INDIAN OCEAN, WHICH WOULD EFFECTIVELY MERGE IT WITH THE INDIAN OCEAN ZONE OF PEACE PROPOSAL.

MOYNIHAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, PROPAGANDA, DIPLOMATIC COMMUNICATIONS, MEETINGS, PUBLICITY CAMPAIGNS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 26 AUG 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: martinml
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974STATE186889
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: NEA/INS:RDLORTON:MMK
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740236-0136
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740817/aaaaaolx.tel
Line Count: 154
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: ISLAMABAD -8127
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: martinml
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 11 JUN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <11 JUN 2002 by cunninfx>; APPROVED <19 MAR 2003 by martinml>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MIXED OUTLOOK FOR INDO-PAK RELATIONS
TAGS: PFOR, IN, PK, AF
To: KATHMANDU COLOMBO
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005